

HI 783 - Introduction to Russian and East European History

Mondays 3:00P-5:50 PM

Greenlaw 305

Prof. Chad Bryant

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Office Hours: W 1:30-3:30

and by appointment

HI 783 is the capstone course for those in the Russian and East European Studies program, although the seminar will be of interest to anyone looking for an introduction to these fields. While designing this syllabus I have kept several goals in mind. One goal is to provide concentrated, in-depth looks at some of the major topics in modern Russian, East European, and Central Asian history. These topics include, but are not limited to, nationalism, the experience of various forms of modernity, the rise and fall of Communist rule, and the challenges faced by these regions in the post-Communist era. A second goal is to expose graduate students to a variety of methodological and interpretive approaches to research questions and to place our books within the larger context of scholarly writing about the regions. Finally, participants will be encouraged to ask new questions inspired by our readings. Russian, East European, and Central Asian studies are exciting, fresh, and expanding fields of study. In asking research questions I hope to inform your own research agenda and encourage you to think about the future of the field as a whole.

Required texts

Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*)

Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia*

Mark Steinberg, *Petersburg Fin-de-Siècle*

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*

Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Krushchev*

Gyorgy/George Konrád, *The City Builder*

Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*

Padriac Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*

Lilia Shevtsova, *Russia - Lost in Transition: The Yeltsin and Putin Legacies*

Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia*

Robert J. Donia, *Sarajevo: A Biography*

Jarrod Tanney, *City of Rogues and Schnorrers: Russia's Jews and the Myth of Old Odessa*

Recommended reading:

Catherine Evuhov and Richard Stites, *A History of Russia since 1800*

Lonnie Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*

Robert Paul Magosci, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*

Garrison Walters, *The Other Europe: Eastern Europe to 1945*

Joseph Rothschild and Nancy Wingfield, *Return to Diversity*

An excellent online resource for background information on Russian history can be found at Bucknell University's "Chronology of Russian History" website: www.bucknell.edu/x20136xml.

The required readings are available at the Ram's Head Bookstore. All of the books listed above, required and recommended, are available on reserve at the undergraduate library.

Course Expectations

The heart of the seminar is class discussion. The success of our meetings depends on everyone reading the week's assigned book and then arriving to class with ideas, insights, or questions for the group. I also hope that we can remain open to other's opinions while offering arguments based upon a thorough understanding of the texts. Quality of thought is more important than quantity.

Every other week before fall break you will be asked to write a review of the book assigned to class. At our first meeting we will divide the class into two groups, Team A and Team B. Team A will write reviews of Judson's *Guardians of the Nation*, which we are reading for August 31. Team B will write reviews of Crews' *For Prophet and Tsar*, which we are reading for September 7. The following week, Sept. 14, Team A writes a review of Mark Steinberg's book and so on.

All reviews should be emailed to me before class begins. Keep your review to no more than three pages. A good review should address the following questions: What is the book about? What is its argument? How is that argument made? What sources are used and how is the book structured? What is the significance of the book's argument? What are the book's strengths and weaknesses? Excellent examples can be found by looking at the reviews published in *Slavic Review* and other scholarly journals available at the library.

Discussion questions to keep in mind while doing the reading will be posted to the "Class discussions" thread within the "Discussion and Private Messages" folder on Sakai. Once during the semester you will be asked, after break, to summarize our discussion and begin the conversation for the second half of the class.

After fall break you will be asked to write one longer review essay of 9-10 pages comparing two of the books that will be reading in the second half of the semester plus one unassigned book of your choosing. You have three options. To compare the Kotkin and Kenny books; the Shevstova and Khalid books; or the Donia and Tanney books. I encourage you to choose the assignment that most closely matches your intellectual interests and ambitions. You should email this assignment directly to me by 3:00 pm before our last class meeting

All of the information available on this syllabus, along with the week's writing assignment, will be available on the course's sakai site.

Your final grade will be determined by using the following percentages:

Class participation: 50%

Three book reviews: 10% each (total 30%)

Book review essay: 20%

Aug. 24

Introductions and Expectations

August 31

Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*

Team A book reviews

Sept. 10

Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia*

Team B book reviews

Sept. 17

Mark Steinberg, *Petersburg Fin-de-Siècle*

Team A book reviews

Sept. 24

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*

Team B book reviews

Oct. 1

Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Krushchev*

Team A book reviews

Oct. 8

Gyorgy/George Konrád, *The City Builder*

Team B book reviews

Oct. 15 Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*

Oct. 22 Padriac Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*

Oct. 29 Lilia Shevstova, *Russia - Lost in Transition: The Yeltsin and Putin Legacies*

Nov. 9 Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia*

Nov.12 – Guest lecture by the current ambassador of Georgia

Nov. 19 Robert J. Donia, *Sarajevo: A Biography*

Nov. 26 Jarrod Tanney, *City of Rogues and Schnorrers: Russia's Jews and the Myth of Old Odessa*

Dec. 3 Writing workshop and discussion of review essays

Dec 10: Final review essays due; please email them to me.